

SERA, INC.

From
SERA to SERA, Inc.
A Progress Report

SOUTHEAST RALEIGH ASSEMBLY, INC. NEWS

DECEMBER 2009



Top row from left: SERA banner debuts at Chavis Heights; College Park neighborhood
Bottom row from left: 2008 Volunteer Recognition Awards event; SERA members in 2004; SERA members at retreat

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A New Beginning For Southeast Raleigh Assembly

Standing still has never been an option for the Southeast Raleigh Assembly (SERA) in the eight years since our establishment. Soon, we'll be able to take bigger and bolder steps on behalf of our community as we become an independent, nonprofit corporation. We believe our new status will enable us to become a stronger catalyst for revitalization of this promising section of Raleigh.

Inside this special report, you'll learn about the accomplishments of SERA, now known as SERA, Inc. You'll also find insights from those who have led SERA over the years and an explanation of how the restructured SERA, Inc. will operate and be funded.

As we move forward, the roles of our members inevitably will change. In fact, the very success of SERA, Inc. will depend on its membership. With members who are strongly committed to making a difference in our community, SERA, Inc. is sure to thrive. In a sense, this report marks the end of SERA and the start of the new and self-sustaining SERA, Inc. We hope you come away energized and inspired to join us in the work ahead.

Message From Dr. James West

Raleigh Mayor Pro Tem Dr. James West represents District C, which includes Southeast Raleigh, on the Raleigh City Council. As a Council member he promoted the establishment of the Southeast Raleigh Assembly.

This has been a momentous year for the Southeast Raleigh Assembly (SERA). What began in 2001 as an advisory board to the Raleigh City Council, with members appointed by the Council, has taken a big leap toward becoming a nonprofit corporation, operating independently to bring about a better or enhanced quality of life for residents of Southeast Raleigh.

Since its inception, SERA has sought long-term economic development for Southeast Raleigh. SERA has addressed the issue of vacant housing, worked to expand homeownership and the development of small businesses, encouraged technology training for youth and helped to establish an economic development agency. In so doing, SERA has drawn out the energy and talents of Southeast Raleigh's residents and called attention to the community's contributions to our City as a whole.

SERA's work over the past eight years has laid the groundwork for the new SERA, Inc., whose focus remains on public safety, education of our youth, business development and improved transportation. This report looks back at what SERA has accomplished and looks forward to what the organization will become under its new structure.

There is much to do in Southeast Raleigh, and much potential, as well. Under the newly formed SERA, Inc., I look forward to seeing healthy neighborhoods, new jobs and a renewal of the entrepreneurial spirit that has marked the history of Southeast Raleigh. I believe SERA, Inc is well positioned to address the tough issues by building community capacity to effect tangible and sustainable change.



Members Of SERA, Past And Present

Ms. AlexAndrea Alexander
Ms. Diane Alexander
Mr. David Baker, Sr.
Ms. Sonia Barnes
Mr. Gordon Blackwell
Mr. Corey Branch
Ms. Jean Brown
Mr. Jerome Brown
Ms. Erin Dale Byrd
Dr. Norman Camp
Mr. Lewis Card
Mr. Terry C. Carter
Ms. Ivonne Castillo
Dr. Charles D. Chambliss, Jr.
Mr. John Church Jr.
Ms. Adrienne Cole
Mr. Daniel Coleman
Rev. Joe Connelly
Mr. B C Cooper
Mr. Courtney Crowder
Mr. Scott Cutler
Mr. Carl Dean
Mr. Jeffrey DeBellis
Ms. Cathey Ector
Mr. Timothy Figgins
Ms. Mildred Flynn
Mr. Chris Foye

Mr. Charles Francis
Ms. Audrey Galloway
Mr. Lyle Gardner
Mr. Tim Gardiner
Dr. Alice Garrett
Ms. Penny Glenn
Ms. Claudia Jones Graham
Mr. Stanley Green
Mr. Wallace Green
Mr. Greg Hatem
Dr. Charles Haywood
Ms. Yvonne Holley
Ms. Yvette Holmes
Ms. Ajuba Joy
Mr. Steve Kenney
Mr. Jim Laurie
Dr. David Mallette
Mr. Preston McClain
Mr. John McConnell
Ms. Vivian McCoy
Ms. Josephine McCullers
Mr. Jim Mebane
Mr. Fred Mills
Mr. James Montague
Ms. Angel Feimster-Montoya
Mr. Bill Mullins
Dr. Eleanor Nunn
Dr. E. B. Palmer Sr.
Ms. Mary Belle Pate
Mr. Martel A. Perry
Dr. Ernest Pickens

Rev. Henry Pickett Jr.
Ms. Lynette D. Pitt
Ms. Octavia Rainey
Mr. Craig Ralph
Mr. John Gilbert Reaves
Mr. Leroy Reynolds
Mr. Steven Roberts
Mr. Louis Rogers III
Ms. Brenda High Sanders
Mr. Joseph Sansom
Mr. John Schlichenmaier
Mr. Craig Richard Smith
Ms. Mary Starkey
Dr. Dianne Boardley Suber
Ms. Nicole Sullivan
Mr. Keith Sutton
Ms. Jeanne Tedrow
Rev. Edward Thomas
Mr. Brad Thompson
Mr. Tyler Toulon
Mr. Claude Trotter
Ms. Heather Vance
Mr. Harold Webb
Mr. Bob Wheeler
Mr. Al White
Rev. Frank T. White, Sr.
Ms. F. Lonnette Williams
Ms. Brenda S. Williamson
Mr. Mark Williard
Mr. Ed Wills
Mr. Brian Yee

Foundation For Prosperity



2008 Annual Volunteer Recognition Awards

The Southeast Raleigh Assembly (SERA) came into existence eight years ago because members of the Southeast Raleigh community wanted to be part of the prosperity that was transforming the city as a whole. They envisioned a Southeast Raleigh with good jobs, safe and comfortable homes and an engaged citizenry. By establishing SERA as a citizens advisory board, the Raleigh City Council recognized the potential in Southeast Raleigh. Since then, the City has provided staff support through the City Manager's Office and the Planning and Community Services departments and committed itself in financial partnership with the community to realize SERA's vision.

Today, SERA has reached a turning point. This year the organization became SERA, Inc. and is changing its status to a nonprofit corporation. Starting in early 2010, SERA,

Inc. will be an independent organization, developing its own leaders, raising its own funds and setting its own course. The new status will enable SERA to gather and leverage a variety of resources to have a bigger impact in the community. SERA, Inc.'s mission, though, remains to enhance Southeast Raleigh's competitive advantage, economic health and quality of life.

Like SERA, the 54-square mile area that constitutes Southeast Raleigh also is poised for a new direction. Local government planners project that much of Raleigh's future growth will take place in this community, thanks to affordable land, proximity to a reinvigorated downtown and good highway access. The population of the City's Southeast Raleigh Planning District, which covers a part of SERA Inc.'s boundary area, is expected to reach 76,934 by 2035, an increase of 112.5 percent from 2005. That is more than twice the growth rate of Raleigh as a whole.

SERA's power to make a difference stems from its organic connection to the area it serves. Most of SERA's members live or work in Southeast Raleigh, and all are deeply familiar with the community, its history and its heritage. SERA aims to build the community's sense of its own capacity, to remind potential investors of its entrepreneurial culture and to inspire awareness of what Southeast Raleigh can become. SERA members know that the foundation for the community's future well-being lies in its own institutions and people.

Southeast Raleigh has contributed much to the fabric of our city. Raleigh is becoming a world-class city because Southeast Raleigh residents have helped to make it so. SERA believes that the talents and energy of members of this community will also make Southeast Raleigh a thriving, economically vibrant place in which to live and do business.

Ed Wills, SERA, Inc. Co-Chair, 2009-2010

"I wanted to make sure that with the growing of Raleigh, especially the downtown area, that everybody had an opportunity to get involved and get a piece of the pie. The Southeast Raleigh Assembly has found a way to do that. They can get information to the people and give them an opportunity to receive a part of this wealth that is coming to downtown."



Our Work So Far!

SERA recognizes that it cannot create economic well-being in a vacuum. So the organization works to bring about the conditions that make prosperity possible: neighborhood stabilization, public safety and empowerment of youth.

To create healthy, stable neighborhoods, SERA pushes to improve City housing policies, make the community development process more effective and prevent home foreclosures.

To promote public safety, SERA spreads the philosophy of community policing and building designs that deter crime. SERA's matching grants invite property owners to create attractive façades for their businesses, and the organization has developed plans to make the major corridors of Poole Road and New Bern Avenue more attractive to investors.

SERA also calls attention to the needs of young people and promotes the participation of Southeast Raleigh residents in civic life, whether through attendance at City Council meetings or enrollment in leadership development classes.

The work of SERA has been divided among four issue teams, whose responsibilities and achievements are described in more detail on the following pages.

As SERA carries out its mission, it has sought to provide the people of Southeast Raleigh with a voice in City government and to enlist them in creating a positive vision of the community. It is on their behalf that SERA exists, and it is only with their enthusiastic cooperation that SERA can succeed.



Chavis Heights Reunion sponsored by SERA



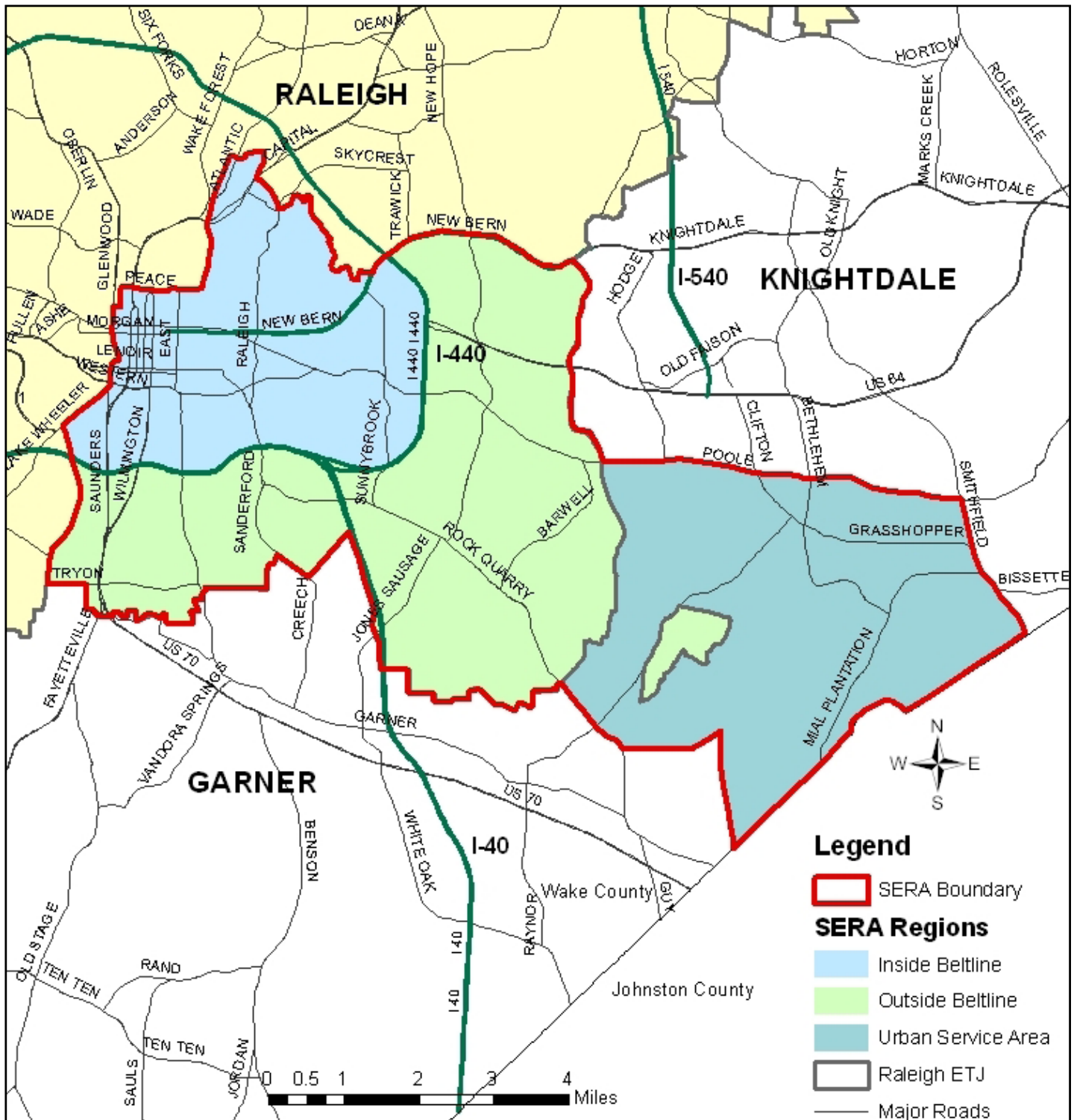
Children at Richard B. Harrison Library

Charles Haywood, SERA Co-Chair, 2001-2003

"I grew up in Southeast Raleigh. I have considerable investment there, so I was very concerned about the continued improvement of that area. I'm proud to be a part of the Southeast Raleigh Assembly and proud to have been able to establish some goals and objectives."



SERA, Inc.'s Boundary



SERA, Inc. serves the southeastern section of Raleigh and the City's area of extraterritorial jurisdiction. Our boundary area encompasses a wide variety of neighborhoods and businesses in downtown Raleigh, within the Interstate 440 Beltline and outside the Beltline, extending to the county line. The major corridors of Interstate 40 and New Bern Avenue cross through the boundary area.

Our Issue Teams

Public Safety

We work to engage members of the community in solving issues that affect their safety and well-being. We involve the community and Police Department in dialogue on community policing and promote improvements to the appearance of property that discourage criminal activity. Our guide to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design explains how to deter crime through architecture, landscaping, lighting and other simple changes in the physical environment of neighborhoods. We have sponsored a successful series of National Night Out events to heighten awareness of crime prevention and build connections within neighborhoods. And with the Parks and Recreation Department, we offer an outdoor basketball program in which the coach mentors youth on job skills and education.



Members of the Public Safety Issue Team meet with Raleigh Police Chief Harry Dolan. The team strives to encourage a good relationship between police and residents of Southeast Raleigh and emphasizes community policing.

Community Capacity Building

SERA's Community Capacity-Building Team offers leadership development to residents, keeps an inventory of businesses and institutions, provides funding for community activities and publishes a widely-distributed newsletter that serves as a point of connection for the community.



A mini-grant from SERA helped to cover the costs of a three-day Summer Arts Safari during which children learned about the African rhythmic heritage as a way to inspire cooperation and unity.



Equity and Business Development

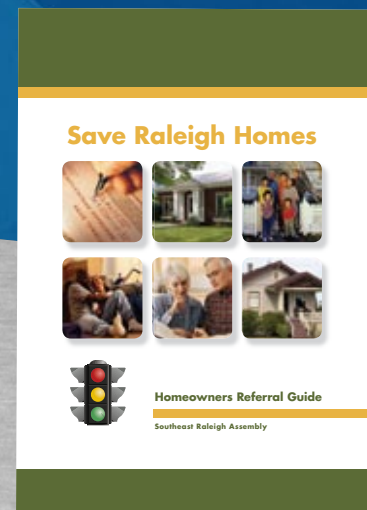
An important focus of SERA's work is to find ways of attracting new businesses, nurturing existing businesses and creating jobs. To direct people to business resources in Raleigh, SERA provides a comprehensive, user-friendly guide. The organization also works to educate businesses in Southeast Raleigh about opportunities for City contracts. And a spinoff Web service, the Virtual Business Incubator, provides technical assistance, education and training for new and existing small businesses.

Housing

To help stabilize neighborhoods, we promote measures to make quality housing more available, improve neighborhoods and increase home ownership and affordable rentals. The Save Raleigh Homes initiative provides a website, toll-free hotline and guide for people in need of information to avoid foreclosure. A SERA spinoff, the Raleigh Area Development Authority, offers financial counseling and other assistance to low- and moderate-income residents.

Our Small Business Resource Guide directs new entrepreneurs in Southeast Raleigh to resources in the area that will help them grow and succeed. The comprehensive guide reflects our goal of enhancing the community's competitive advantage.

The Homeowners Referral Guide offers resources to help homeowners avoid foreclosure when they are facing financial difficulties. It also informs renters about the process of buying a home.



SERA, Inc. : The Future

Just as SERA has endeavored to help Southeast Raleigh become a self-sustaining community, the organization has sought to build its own capacity for self-sufficiency.

As a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, SERA, Inc. is growing beyond its role as an advisory board to the Raleigh City Council. The new independent status will confer greater flexibility to take a broader approach as we pursue full prosperity, empowerment and economic development for the community we serve.

The change also will mean greater reliance on sources of funding beyond that provided by the City of Raleigh. SERA, Inc. recognizes that to gain and retain the confidence of funding sources, the organization must produce measurable results in Southeast Raleigh.

Priorities

We have reaffirmed neighborhood stabilization and revitalization as our critical focus area. The membership has identified four key ways of contributing to neighborhood stability and revitalization:

1. Making physical improvements that increase the public's sense of safety and prevent crime;
2. Empowering and educating our youth;
3. Promoting prosperity and business development; and
4. Advocating for public transportation improvements.

To address these areas, SERA, Inc. initially has adopted two strategic priorities and may broaden its efforts as it gains capacity:

1. Create safe and sustainable neighborhoods by improving the physical, social and economic environment of Southeast Raleigh.
2. Integrate asset mapping into the organization's activities.



SERA retreat in July 2009

Organizational structure

The roles and responsibilities of the leadership and members are changing to meet the needs of SERA, Inc. While SERA traditionally has operated as an interactive partnership, the new structure requires a more formal organizational structure.

SERA's Executive Committee currently serves as SERA, Inc.'s initial Board of Directors. The permanent Board will include seven to 15 Directors, who will elect their officers. The Board will set policy, oversee the fulfillment of the organization's mission, supervise the transition, implement the business plan and hire staff. The Board also will provide leadership and coordination for the staff. And the Board will have fiduciary responsibility for SERA, Inc. property and funds.

Members of SERA, Inc. will have the responsibility of furthering the work and sustainability of the organization. Each member will contribute time, talents and resources to making a difference in Southeast Raleigh. Members will play roles on committees, in fundraising, as ambassadors for the organization, as resources and as staff support. Members will reflect a diversity of experience and expertise to address all areas of community revitalization.

A paid staff will include a President who will serve as the lead day-to-day administrator. The President will hire staff and carry out the work directed by the Board of Directors, including assuring that the organization has a long-range strategy to achieve its mission.

Scott Cutler, SERA, Inc. Co-Chair 2009-2010

"We have tough questions to answer and we have to answer them quickly. Who are we as an organization? Can we define ourselves to the community in a clear, simple and straightforward way? Who are the people of Southeast Raleigh, and how can we reach and engage them in ways that benefit the whole community? And can we sustain ourselves as a business, with missions that matter and provide for our continuation? Now is the time for us to work hard, focus, and find the right answers."



Funding

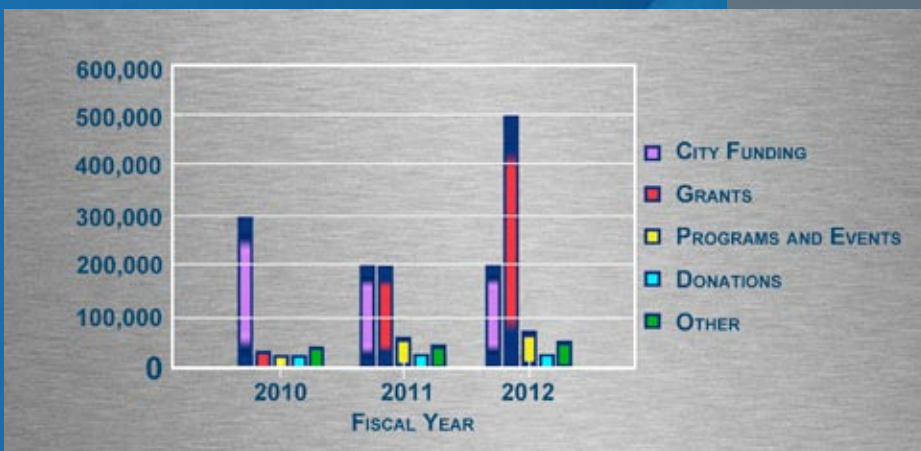
Our organization currently depends on the City of Raleigh for financial support, and the City has invested more than \$2.5 million in SERA since its inception. As SERA, Inc., we will continue to request funds from the City during our first three years of operation. However, City funds will represent a declining percentage of SERA, Inc.'s budget in fiscal years 2011 and 2012. At the same time, SERA, Inc. will seek supplemental funds from grants, programs, events, tax deductible donations and other revenue sources. Grants especially will be an increasing part of our budget, meaning that researching and responding to grant opportunities will be a priority for SERA, Inc.

SERA, Inc. will look to its Board of Directors to actively contribute to fundraising efforts, particularly when City funding is no longer available. In part to provide assurance to funding sources, the business plan for SERA, Inc. calls for the adoption of a scorecard to measure progress and achieve long-term sustainability.

Total projected revenue for SERA, Inc.

2010: \$335,000
2011: \$481,765
2012: \$837,647

Sources of projected revenue:



Greg Hatem , left, and Brad Thompson,

Greg Hatem, SERA Co-Chair, 2003-2007

"We see Southeast Raleigh as one of the most important parts of Raleigh in regards to providing an area for residential growth in the heart of the city. We feel it has great potential and should be a very desirable place to live in the coming years. This, in turn, will bring local businesses and service industries to the area."

Brad Thompson SERA Co-Chair, 2005-2008

"The investment community has recognized that Southeast Raleigh is not only an affordable and enjoyable place to live, but also a place that offers countless opportunities for those who seek new customers, a quality workforce and excellent access to both services and markets."

Important Dates In SERA's History

March 2001

The Raleigh City Council creates the Southeast Raleigh Assembly with 45 members.

August-December 2001

With the aid of facilitators from N.C. State University, SERA develops a strategic plan with six high-priority issue areas.



**Bill Mullins,
SERA Co-Chair, 2001-2003**

"There has been some history of the City of Raleigh attempting to impose plans on the area without much input from the local community, and the leadership in SERA has been rightfully sensitive to that criticism. The town hall meetings and discussion

facilitators provided at the beginning are good examples of the constant effort to involve all citizens in a meaningful and effective way."

May 2003

Virtual Business Incubator Program begins as a SERA spinoff.

Fall 2003

SERA hosts first National Night Out.



National Night Out on Tarboro Road

Early 2004

SERA supports Olde Towne Development and encourages the City Council to limit low-income housing stock in Southeast Raleigh Assembly Boundary Area.

November 2005

Raleigh Area Development Authority (RADA) opens office as a SERA spinoff.

December 2005

SERA holds 1st annual recognition of members and volunteers from the community and presents the James P. West Award.

2006

Façade Grant Program development begins.



2006 volunteer recognition event



2006 SERA gathering

December 2006

Housing Best Practices Study is completed by the Housing Issue Team and used for Comprehensive Plan update.

Summer 2007

SERA produces the Small Business Resource Guide for citywide distribution.



October 2007

Through Community Capacity-Building Issue Team, SERA begins supporting grassroots events in Southeast Raleigh.

July 2008

SERA retreat establishes timetable for becoming a standalone organization by 2013.

Summer 2008

SERA launches Mini-Grant program.



Chavis Heights Reunion band

2008

City Council approves Southeast Raleigh Façade Grant Program.



Summer 2008

SERA begins branding with a SER (Southeast Raleigh) sticker and survey insert in newsletter distributed to more than 9,000 people.



October 2008

SERA begins project work on Southeast Raleigh asset mapping.

November 2008

SERA presents a forum on foreclosure and produces a referral guide, website and 800 number for assistance.

March 2009

Asset Mapping completed.

July 2009

Assembly votes at annual retreat to become a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization as SERA, Inc. with a target date of January 15, 2010.

September, 2009

SERA adopts business plan and bylaws for SERA, Inc.

November 2009

SERA, Inc.'s Public Safety Issue Team publishes a guide to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, which offers practical tips for residents to reduce crime in their neighborhoods.

Stanley Green, SERA Co-Chair, 2003-2004

"The Southeast Raleigh Assembly was established to coordinate many activities and to bring the community together along with government and corporate interests. Our job is to be able to pull those entities together. We each don't want to be doing our own thing and not coordinating everything in the same direction."



Vision

The Assembly envisions the day that Southeast Raleigh will be an economically sound community, offering its citizens a thriving place in which to live, work, recreate and conduct business.

Mission

The Assembly's mission is to enhance the community's competitive advantage, to create economic prosperity, and to improve the quality of life for Southeast Raleigh and its citizens.

For more information about
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